

SPORTS BALL CARRY BAG

RELATED APPLICATION

This application claims priority to a corresponding
5 provisional application U.S. Serial No. 60/451,300, filed
February 28, 2003 in the name of the applicant of this
application.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

10 This invention relates generally to carry bags and purses
and, more specifically, to a sports ball-type carry bag or
purse.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

15 Sports, such as basketball, football, tennis and soccer,
are played by millions of Americans. Sports are also a prime
source of entertainment for millions of people who watch both
professional and amateur games either live or on television.

Many sports fans purchase various types of sports apparel
20 and memorabilia and then either wear or display these items in
order to identify themselves as fans of a particular sport,
player or team. Carrying bags and backpacks imprinted with a
sports team's logo or a sports' professional association (e.g.,
"NBA") are often used by players and fans alike to carry various

items while at the same time expressing their affinity for a particular sport, player or team. Sports balls, as opposed to standard carrying bags and backpacks, carry the most immediately identifiable association with a particular sport. Although
5 sports balls can be relatively large in size, their sealed design prevent them from being used as carrying devices.

A need therefore existed for a sports ball carry bag comprising a ball having a standard sports ball shape and defining an opening that is dimensioned to allow a person to carry objects
10 within the sports ball, in order to allow a person to carry objects while at the same time identify a particular sport of interest.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

15 It is an object of the present invention to provide a sports ball carry bag having a handle and an opening dimensioned to receive objects.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a sports ball carry bag having the shape of a standard sports ball
20 in order to allow the carrier of the sports ball carry bag to be identified with a particular sport.

Other objects, features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from a consideration of the following detailed description.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

In accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, a sports ball carry bag is disclosed. The sports ball carry bag
5 comprises, in combination, a sports ball, the sports ball defining an opening, and a handle coupled to the sports ball proximate the opening.

In accordance with another embodiment of the present invention, a sports ball carry bag is disclosed. The sports ball
10 carry bag comprises, in combination, a sports ball defining an opening, the sports ball being at least one of a basketball, soccer ball, volleyball, football and tennis ball, a flap coupled to the sports ball and dimensioned to cover the opening so as to prevent objects located inside the sports ball from
15 falling out of the opening, a support base coupled to an outer portion of the sports ball opposite the opening and dimensioned to prevent the sports ball from rolling when the support base being in contact with a substantially flat surface, a plurality of ribs dimensioned to be placed proximate an interior surface
20 of the sports ball, the plurality of ribs dimensioned to substantially maintain an original shape of the sports ball, a fabric dimensioned to be coupled to the plurality of ribs proximate the interior surface of the sports ball, and a handle coupled to the sports ball proximate the opening.

The foregoing and other objects, features, and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following, more particular description of the preferred embodiments of the invention, as illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a perspective view of one embodiment of the sports ball carry bag of the present invention, showing a basketball defining an opening and having a flap, a handle, and a support base.

Figure 2 is a perspective, cut-away view of the sports ball carry bag of Figure 1 without the basketball skin covering, and showing support ribs used to maintain the shape of the basketball.

Figure 3 is a perspective view of the support ribs of Figure 2, showing the support ribs coupled to one another by a single screw through a center portion of each rib.

Figure 3A is a perspective view of one embodiment of the present invention, showing support ribs coupled to a base plate.

Figure 3B is a top view of the support ribs of Figure 3.

Figure 3C is a top view of the support ribs of Figure 3A.

Figure 4 is a perspective, cut-away view of one embodiment of the sports ball carry bag of the present invention, showing fabric placed inside the sports ball and showing support ribs in phantom.

Figure 5 is a perspective view of one embodiment of the sports ball carry bag of the present invention, showing a basketball defining an opening and having a handle and a support base.

Figure 5A is a perspective view of one embodiment of the present invention, showing a sports ball carry bag comprised of a football.

5 Figure 5B is a perspective view of one embodiment of the present invention, showing a sports ball carry bag comprised of a volleyball and having a plurality of feet.

Figure 5C is a perspective view of one embodiment of the present invention, showing a sports ball carry bag comprised of a general purpose ball having a design imprinted on an outer surface
10 of the ball.

Figure 5D is a perspective view of one embodiment of the present invention, showing a sports ball carry bag comprised of a tennis ball.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring to Figures 1, 2, 5, 5A, 5B, 5C, and 5D a sports ball carry bag, hereinafter sports ball carry bag 10, is disclosed. The sports ball carry bag 10 comprises a sports ball 12 (shown in Figures 1, 4, 5, 5A, 5B, 5C and 5D). The sports ball 12 can be a basketball 14 (shown in Figures 1 and 5), a soccer ball (not shown), a football 16 (shown in Figure 5A), a volleyball 18 (shown in Figure 5B), a tennis ball 20 (shown in Figure 5D), a general purpose ball 22 (shown in Figure 5C), or any other type of sports ball capable of containing items. The sports ball 12 defines an opening 24. The opening 24 is dimensioned to permit the placement of at least one object inside the sports ball 12. In one embodiment, the opening 24 is created at a manufacturing stage, while in another embodiment, an incision is made to create the opening 24 at a post-manufacturing stage.

The sports ball carry bag 10 further comprises a handle 26 coupled to the sports ball 12 proximate the opening 24. The handle 26 permits a person (not shown) to more easily carry the sports ball carry bag 10.

Referring now to Figure 1, one embodiment of the sports ball carry bag 10 of the present invention is shown, in which a flap 28 is used to cover the opening 24. The flap 28 is coupled to the sports ball 12 and dimensioned to cover the opening 24 so

as to prevent objects located inside the sports ball 12 from falling out of the opening 24. While, in this embodiment, the sports ball carry bag 10 comprises a flap 28, it should be clearly understood that substantial benefit could be derived
5 from alternative embodiments of the present invention in which some other mechanism is used to secure the opening 24, such as a foam or net, or in which the shape of the sports ball 12 is such that it closes over the opening 24 when the opening 24 is not being used to pass an object or hand therethrough, or in which
10 there is no covering of any kind.

In the preferred embodiment, the sports ball carry bag 10 comprises a support base 30 coupled to an outer portion of the sports ball 12 opposite the opening 24. The support base 30 is dimensioned to prevent the sports ball 12 from rolling when the
15 support base 30 is in contact with a substantially flat surface (not shown). In an alternative embodiment, shown in Figure 5B, the sports ball carry bag 10 comprises a plurality of feet 32 coupled to an outer portion of the sports ball 12 opposite the opening 24. The plurality of feet 32 are also dimensioned to
20 prevent the sports ball 12 from rolling, or otherwise moving in an undesired way, when the feet 30 are in contact with a substantially flat surface. While, in several embodiments, the sports ball carry bag 10 comprises a support base 30 or a plurality of feet 32, it should be clearly understood that

substantial benefit could be derived from an alternative embodiment of the present invention in which alternative stabilizing means are used for preventing the sports ball carry bag 10 from rolling away (such as a sports ball 12 having a substantially flat bottom surface), or in which there is no mechanism for preventing the sports ball 12 from rolling. For example, the tennis ball 20 (shown in Figure 5D) could be used with a small handle 26 to hold jewelry, make-up or other items capable of fitting into the interior of a tennis ball 20 without using a support base 30.

Referring now to Figures 2, 3, 3A, 3B and 3C, the sports ball carry bag 10 preferably comprises a plurality of ribs 34 dimensioned to be placed proximate an interior surface of the sports ball 12. The plurality of ribs 34 are dimensioned to substantially maintain an original shape of the sports ball 12. The plurality of ribs 34 prevent the sports ball 12 from becoming deformed or otherwise misshapen due to the fact that the sports ball 12 is not inflated with pressurized air in order to maintain its shape. In one embodiment, shown in Figures 3 and 3B, the plurality of ribs 34 are coupled to one another through the use of a screw 35. In another embodiment, shown in Figures 3A and 3C, the plurality of ribs 34 are coupled to a base plate 38 with a pair of screws 35. However, it should be clearly understood that substantial benefit could be derived

from alternative embodiments of the present invention in which the plurality of ribs are: 1) not coupled to one another; 2) coupled to one another by some mechanism other than a screw 35, such as being molded together; or 3) coupled to one another without the use of a base plate 38. For example, the plurality of ribs may be coupled directly to an interior surface of the sports ball 12.

Referring now to Figure 4, in one embodiment, the sports ball carry bag 10 comprises a fabric 36 dimensioned to be placed proximate an interior surface of the sports ball 12. The fabric 36 may be coupled to: 1) an interior surface of the sports ball 12; 2) the handle 26; 3) the support base 30; or 4) the plurality of ribs 34. Alternatively, the fabric 36 may be dimensioned to be placed inside the sports ball 12 without the need for coupling it to any other object. For example, some fabrics have the ability to hold shape and could be dimensioned to be placed inside a sports ball 12 without the need for coupling. It is within the spirit and scope of this invention that a foam-type material be placed proximate an interior surface of the sports ball.

Referring now to Figure 5C, a design 40 may be imprinted on an outer surface of the sports ball 12 to provide a decorative effect to the sports ball 12. The design 40 may be accomplished with paint, photographs, a team logo, or some other type of

decoration so long as the basic shape of the sports ball 12 is maintained.

In the preferred embodiment, the sports ball carry bag 10 is a purse, although it should be clearly understood that
5 substantial benefit could be derived from an alternative configuration in which the sports ball carry bag 10 is a more gender neutral item, such as a utility bag, a duffel bag, sports bag or the like.

In one embodiment, the sports ball carry bag 10 is created
10 by cutting an opening 24 into a sports ball 12, and then attaching a handle 26 to the sports ball 12 proximate the opening 24. Alternatively, the sports ball 12 may be constructed of an alternative material, such as plastic, leather, vinyl, lucite, etc., so long as it retains the shape of
15 a standard sports ball 12.

While the invention has been particularly shown and described with reference to preferred embodiments thereof, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that the foregoing and other changes in form and details may be made
20 therein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.